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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000918

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STATE FOR EB/ESC AND NEA/ARP
TREASURY FOR OASIA
USDOC FOR 4520/MAC/AME
DOE FOR IE - L. COBURN AND C. WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: X5, X6

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SUBJECT: KUWAIT OIL SITREP 3/13/03

REF: KUWAIT 898

Classified By: DCM Frank C. Urbancic for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D)

1. (C) A Senior KPC official informed Embassy late afternoon of March 12 that Kuwaiti production reached 2.4 mmbd. The source noted that Embassy should watch the newspapers on 3/13 for further details.

2. (U) Local press reports on March 13 quoted Nader Al-Sultan, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, as saying that Kuwait had raised production to its maximum capacity of 2.4 mmbd. He denied earlier reports that oil wells had been shut in and said all wells and refineries would continue to operate in spite of hostilities. Sultan told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the maximum output would be maintained for a brief period, but gave no specific time span. He added that KPC has prepared several scenarios for war contingencies with the aim to maintain production, exports and strategic stock while protecting workers and facilities.

3. (C) The press reports note the inconsistency between Sultan's remarks and March 4 remarks by KOC CEO Ahmed Al-Arbeed, who told reporters earlier that Northern oilfields would be closed in the event of hostilities, slashing the countries output by up to 700,000 bpd (Reftel). A KPC source told the Embassy that Arbeed had spoken out of turn, and had been reprimanded for the statement.

4. (SBU) NOTE: Post intends to distribute sitreps such as this via SIPRNet e-mail to interested readers. To be added to the mailing list, send a request via SIPRNet e-mail to SchwartzTPKuwait@state.sgov.gov.
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